

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) At a server computer system that is network connectable to a plurality of client computer systems, at least first and second client computer systems being configured to indicate a status for and to send and receive electronic messages for an electronic messaging user identified by a user identification, a method for updating a master status of the electronic messaging user notwithstanding that the first client computer system and second client computer system may indicate different statuses for the electronic messaging user, the master status being the status that is reflected to other client computer systems, the method comprising:

- maintaining at the server a first view status for the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification, the first view status indicating the status of the electronic messaging user as detected at the first client computer system when the user is logged on via the first client computer system as an electronic messaging user;
- maintaining at the server a second view status for the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification, the second view indicating the status of the electronic messaging user as detected at the second client computer system when the user is logged on via the second client computer system as an electronic messaging user;
- receiving at the server a first status update from the first client computer system, the first status update indicating that the first client computer system has detected a change in the status of the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification, the change in status corresponding to the first computer system;
- in response to receiving the first status update, the server evaluating at least the first status update, the first view status, and the second view status according to specified status rules to determine the master status of the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification who is logged on via both

the first client computer system and the second client computer system as an electronic messaging user; and
storing the master status at the server in a master view corresponding to the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification; and
reflecting an indication of the master status such that an appropriate status for the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is provided to other electronic messaging users.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
associating a first view identifier with the first view status; and
associating a second view identifier with the second view status.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
updating the first view status in accordance with the first status update.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein evaluating further comprises determining whether the master status should reflect the first status update.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the storing-further comprises changing the master status to the status indicated in the first status update.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the storing-further comprises the step of retaining the master status even though the status indicated in the first status update differs from the master status.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the evaluating further comprises changing the master status according to a priority system.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 8, wherein changing the master status according to a priority system further comprises:

changing the master status to offline if the first status update indicates the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is invisible;
refraining from changing the master status if the first status update indicates the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is offline;
refraining from changing the master status if the first status update indicates the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is idle;
changing the master status to offline if the first status update indicates the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is offline and one or more remaining view statuses associated with the messaging client, including the second view status, indicate the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is offline; and
changing the master status to idle if the first status update indicates the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is idle and one or more remaining view statuses associated with the messaging client, including the second view status, indicate the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification is idle or offline.

10. (Currently Amended) At a server that is network connectable to a plurality of clients, each client in the plurality of clients maintaining a status for an electronic messaging user identified by a user identification, and each client being configured to receive electronic messages addressed to the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification, the electronic messaging user having presence information maintained at the server, a method for updating the presence information that is to be reflected to subscribers, the method comprising the steps of:

creating at the server a view status for each of the one or more clients in the plurality of clients, each view status representing the status of the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification detected at a corresponding client, each view status being identified by a unique view identifier, the electronic messaging user being logged on as an electronic messaging user identified by the user identification through at least two clients at the same time;

consolidating at the server the presence information for the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification based on an evaluation of each view status such that the consolidated presence information is representative of a current status of the electronic messaging user even if some view statuses differ, wherein the consolidated presence information is maintained in a master view;

receiving at the server a status update from one of the one or more clients; and updating in the master view at the server the consolidated presence information for the electronic messaging user identified by the user identification in the master view based on an evaluation of the status update and each view status.

11. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein creating further comprises receiving a first status change at the server, the first status change being representative of an initial status of one of the one or more clients.

12. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein consolidating the presence information further comprises comparing each view status to determine a current status of the user, the current status corresponding to the presence information.

13. (Original) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein each status update is reflected in an associated client view status, the associated client view status being identified by a view identifier sent with each status update.

14. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein updating further comprises changing the presence information according to a priority system.

15. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 14, wherein changing the presence information according to a priority system further comprises at least one of:

changing the presence information to offline if the status update indicates the electronic messaging user is invisible;

refraining from changing the presence information if the status update indicates the electronic messaging user is offline;

refraining from changing the presence information if the status update indicates the electronic messaging user is idle;

changing the presence information to offline if the status update indicates the electronic messaging user is offline and the remaining view statuses indicate the electronic messaging user is offline;

changing the presence information to idle if the status update indicates the electronic messaging user is idle and the remaining view statuses indicate the electronic messaging user is idle or offline; and

changing the presence information to match the status update.

16. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein updating further comprises reflecting the updated presence information in the master view to the subscribers.

17. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 10, wherein updating further comprises changing the client view status associated with the status change, such that the client view status accurately reflects the status change.

18. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 10.

19. (Previously Presented) In an instant messaging group having a user associated with multiple clients, each client configured to detect a status of the user and to send and receive electronic messages for the user, the user having consolidated presence information representative of a master status stored at a server, the master status representing the status that is reflected to subscribers even if the user status detected at some of the multiple clients differs, a method for reflecting the master status to subscribers, the method comprising the steps of:

for each of the multiple clients, creating at the server a client view status at a server when each of the multiple clients sends a first status change to the server, each client view status representing the status of the user as detected at a corresponding client, the user being logged on to at least two clients at the same time to receive electronic messages;

assigning at the server a view identifier to each client view status when the first status change is received at the server, wherein each view identifier associates one of the multiple clients with a corresponding client view status; setting at the server the master status based on an evaluation of each client view status;

for each subsequent status change received from one of the multiple clients at the server, updating the master status in accordance with an evaluation of the subsequent status change and each client view status, wherein the presence information reflected to the subscribers corresponds to the master status.

20. (Original) A method as defined in claim 19, wherein the client view status is representative of a current status of an associated client.

21. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 19, wherein setting the master status further comprises reflecting the master status to the subscribers.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 19, wherein updating the master status further comprises changing the master status according to a priority system.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 22, wherein changing the master status according to a priority system further comprises at least one of:

changing the master status to offline if the subsequent status update indicates the user is invisible;

refraining from changing the master status if the status update indicates the user is offline;

refraining from changing the master status if the subsequent status update indicates the user is idle;

changing the master status to offline if the subsequent status update indicates the user is offline and the remaining client view statuses indicate the user is offline;

changing the master status to idle if the subsequent status update indicates the user is idle and the remaining client view statuses indicate the user is idle or offline; and

changing the master status to match the subsequent status update.

24. (Original) A method as defined in claim 19, wherein the master status reflected to the subscribers is representative of a current status of the user.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 19, further comprising selecting one of the client view statutes to be represented in the master status.

26. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 19.

27. (Previously Presented) A computer program product for use in an instant messaging system having a user associated with one or more clients, each client in the one or more clients configured to detect a status of the user and to send and receive electronic messages for the user, the user having presence information reflected to subscribers, the computer program product for implementing a method for updating the presence information, the computer program product comprising:

a computer-readable medium carrying executable instructions that, when executed, cause a server to perform the following:

create at the server a view status for each of the one or more clients, each view status representing the status of the user detected at a corresponding client, each view status being identified by a unique view identifier, the user being logged on to at least two clients at the same time to receive electronic messages;

consolidate at the server presence information for the user based on an evaluation of each view status such that the consolidated presence information is representative of a current status of the user;

receive at the server a status update from one of the one or more clients;

update at the server the consolidated presence information for the user according to the status update; and
reflect at the server the updated consolidated presence information to the subscribers such that appropriate presence information is provided to the subscribers even if some view statuses differ.

28. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as defined in claim 27, wherein updating the presence information further comprises:

changing the presence information to offline if the status update indicates the user is invisible;
refraining from changing the presence information if the status update indicates the user is offline;
refraining from changing the presence information if the status update indicates the user is idle;
changing the presence information to offline if the status update indicates the user is offline and the remaining view statuses indicate the status of the user is offline;
changing the presence information to idle if the status update indicates the user is idle and the remaining view statuses indicate the user is idle or offline; and
changing the presence information to match the status update.

29. (Previously Presented) A method in a server for generating a master presence status of a user who is online via multiple clients at the same time, the method comprising:

for each of the multiple clients through which the user is currently online, receiving at the server a client presence status of the user as reported by the client; and

generating the master presence status representing a current presence status of the user based on the received client presence statuses reported by the multiple clients.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein when the client presence status reported by one client indicates that the user is busy and by another client indicates that the user idle, setting the master presence status to indicate that the user is busy.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein when the client presence status reported by all but one client indicates that the client is offline, setting the master presence status to the client presence status of the client through which the user is currently online.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 including upon receiving at the server an indication that the client presence status of a client has changed, setting the master presence status based on the changed client presence status.